

**CLINICAL TOXICOLOGY—The Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment of Poisoning**—S. Locket, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.P. (London), Senior Physician, Oldchurch Hospital, Romford, Essex. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1957. 772 pages, \$20.00.

It is unfortunate that the author of such a fine work exhibits a lack of understanding of sources of information in other books, or the presence of other books written by clinicians of experience, when he writes in the preface, "My reasons for writing this book are relatively simple. A modern book covering this section of clinical practice was a necessity. Since such a book did not in fact exist it became necessary to write one. There are practically no books on clinical toxicology written by physicians in active clinical practice. Sections on toxicology in various textbooks or tomes on toxicology by laboratory workers, biochemists, pharmacologists, public health officers, pathologists and forensic pathologists are frequent. . . . The majority of these writers have never treated a sick patient and certainly not in the past few decades, yet most of them advise on treatment. Many of these writers do not even possess a medical qualification, yet all advise on the best treatment for poisoning.

"Unfortunately, the treatment of a patient in practice (like all other skilled technical procedures) is far different and far more difficult than a few casual words written in a book or journal. The correct treatment of the sick requires considerable clinical experience over and in addition to book knowledge, and the most effective treatment for any condition can only be decided by a clinician who has experienced the disappointments and successes that clinical practice can produce."

The true justifications for this book are (1) the author's extensive experience and knowledge, (2) the paucity of such books by British authors, (3) the willingness of the author to write a more extensive treatise than most other books on the subject of clinical toxicology. The book is written with the bias of the clinician responsible for the diagnosis and care of the patient. The author exhibits not only the qualities of a careful clinical observer, but a familiarity with an extensive literature on poisoning.

The plan of the book indicates that it is intended for the practitioner rather than for the student. For example, Part I is a seven-chapter discussion of treatment in relation to the presenting symptoms and pathology. A book for students should first discuss individual poisons or groups of similar poisons, from all aspects, before outlining the principles, for principles cannot be understood without a knowledge of factual data upon which principles are founded. Part II is entitled "Symptoms and Treatment Described for Individual Poisonous Agents" and consists of seventeen chapters in which drugs and poisons are grouped in part according to pharmacological effect and in part according to physical or chemical properties (chapter VIII, Toxic Gases; chapter XXI, Arsenic, Antimony, Bismuth, Phosphorus, Lead). Vegetable and Plant Poisons are grouped into three chapters (chapters XV, XVI, XVIII) without regard to action. In the first of these chapters are collected vegetable-derived drugs of known composition, many of which are used as drugs, such as atropine, scopolamine, physostigmine, prothoveratrine, ergotamine and tubocurarine, but which are not a homogeneous pharmacological group. Also included in this chapter are many synthetically produced drugs related chemically or pharmacologically to the naturally occurring drugs; e.g., methantheline, carbachol, neostigmine, lysergic acid diethylamine and decamethonium. There are also described plant-derived poisons of known chemical composition not used as drugs, and some of their synthetic analogues which are therapeutic agents; e.g., nicotine and hexamethonium. The second of these three chapters includes

poisons, which cause gastrointestinal disturbance, such as the laxatives aloe, castor oil, colchicine, and ipecac. A discussion of digitalis and other cardiotonics, cyanogens and milk sickness make up most of the third chapter. Chapter XVIII is devoted to animal poisons having a variety of actions such as venoms of snakes, black widow spider and jellyfish. There is no discussion of the stingray which causes so many injuries in Pacific waters.

Part III contains two chapters on identification of poisons. In the first chapter is a thoroughgoing description of qualitative and quantitative methods for alcohol, barbiturates, salicylates, and lead. Identification of mercury and the determination of serum cholinesterase are inadequately described. The second chapter is one rarely found in a textbook on toxicology, namely "Identification and Botanical Characteristics of Some Poisonous Plants." This chapter is especially helpful for those cases who have ingested poisonous plants whose active principles cannot be readily recognized. One looks in vain for methods of identification of strychnine, morphine, nicotine, phenol, arsenic, chloral hydrate and many other common poisons.

This is a useful book, and in sections a superior book but its classification, scientific approach and chemical discussions leave much to be desired.

CLINTON H. THIENES, M.D.

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**A WOMAN DOCTOR LOOKS AT LOVE AND LIFE**—Marion Hilliard, M.D. Doubleday and Company, Inc., 575 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y., 1957. 190 pages, \$2.95.

This very readable book started as a series of magazine articles. These consisted of subjects which this author found worried her women patients and caused them to seek medical advice. From adolescence on through old age, the many problems of living are discussed philosophically and with great insight. For example—her bit of advice to adolescents: "The most vital piece of wisdom that I can tell you about is the inevitability of life. Each act is followed without fail by a consequence. True responsibility can only come from your own inner discipline." Or, to husbands: "Some husbands give nothing to a marriage but bread, which sustains life, but not joy." Or fatigue: "Some fatigue is caused by too much to do and some by too little; some is a by-product of glandular change and some is the result of monotony or pure selfishness." And on "Old Age": "Age worn with dignity and charm is a delight."

The twenty-five years which Dr. Hilliard spent in practice and as chief of obstetrics and gynecology with a Women's College in Toronto, Canada, together with her understanding of living with all its problems gives us a book, which is profitable reading for all ages and both sexes.

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**REGULATION AND MODE OF ACTION OF THYROID HORMONES**—Ciba Foundation Colloquia on Endocrinology—Volume 10—G. E. W. Wolstenholme, O.B.E., M.A., M.B., B.Ch., and Elaine C. P. Millar, A.H.-W.C., A.R.I.C., Editors for the Ciba Foundation, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1957. 311 pages, 114 illustrations, \$8.50.

In June, 1956 under the sponsorship of the Ciba Foundation, an international group of 32 physiologists, anatomists, biochemists, enzymologists and endocrinologists gathered for a three-day discussion of the present concepts of the regulation and mode of action of thyroid hormones. The 18 papers presented, as well as the text of the discussions, comprise the contents of the book.

The papers varied from preliminary reports of work in progress to comprehensive dissertations. The papers on Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Thyroid relationships, by Drs. G. W. Harris and J. W. Woods, from Maudsley Hospital, London, and by Dr. M. A. Greer from the Veterans Administration

Hospital, Long Beach, California, were particularly lucid, and presented clearly the basis for the present concept of the hypothalamic control of anterior pituitary function.

Several papers dealt with the metabolism of thyroid hormone by peripheral tissues. The report by Dr. O. Thibault, from the University of Paris, was an excellent presentation of both original work and the work of others indicating that peripheral tissues can convert the thyroid hormones, thyroxine (T<sub>4</sub>), and tri-iodothyronine (T<sub>3</sub>) into their acetic acid derivatives, tetraiodothyroacetic acid (TETRAC) and tri-iodothyroacetic acid (TRIAC) which may be the active forms of the hormones at the cellular level. Clinical studies with TRIAC presented by Dr. W. R. Trotter from University College Hospital Medical School, London, suggest that orally administered TRIAC may have a more immediate effect on lowering blood cholesterol than it does on raising the BMR. This property, if substantiated, may have considerable clinical application in problems of hypercholesterolemia.

The discussions following each paper were, on the whole, disappointing. One had the feeling that these were carefully edited so that all controversy was eliminated. A few of the discussors contributed valuable additional data and critical comment, but for the most part, the discussions were rather sterile.

In general this is a "progress report" of work on thyroid physiology now in progress. From this symposium one can gain a glimpse of the nature and direction of present research on the control and function of the thyroid gland.

FRANCIS S. GREENSPAN, M.D.

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**THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE—For Body Alignment and Function**—Marian Williams, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy, School of Medicine, Stanford University, and Catherine Worthington, Ph.D., Director of Professional Education, The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, Inc., W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1957. 127 pages, \$3.50.

This is a manual developed by the authors for use by physical therapy students. Three major topics are covered: an analysis of body alignment, the rationale and description of exercises for various areas of the body, and a diagrammatic anatomical review of the major muscles of the body and their kinesiology.

It is well illustrated by line drawings showing pictorially the accompanying subject matter so that physicians and others unaccustomed to reading exercise instructions can easily follow the text. A rather thorough description is given of the various maneuvers by which the patient can mobilize the various segments of his body and strengthen muscles by calisthenics designed to use gravity as a resistance mechanism. Such exercises are usually taught as a home program to patients.

This book is useful mainly for physical therapists and students in corrective physical education though it warrants a perusal by orthopedists, physiatrists, and other physicians handling cases with musculoskeletal problems.

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**MAY'S MANUAL OF THE DISEASES OF THE EYE—For Students and General Practitioners—Twenty-second Edition**—Revised and Edited by Charles A. Perera, M.D., Associate Clinical Professor; College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1957. 518 pages, \$6.00.

This book has long been the eye Bible of the beginner in ophthalmology, but especially of the medical student and the general practitioner.

In the present revision, some of the obsolete material has been deleted, and it now includes the presently accepted

concepts of eye diseases. It also describes the place of the corticosteroids in ophthalmology and contains an evaluation of the antibiotics. The picture of retrolental fibroplasia and allied conditions are discussed in light of our recent knowledge.

It is particularly noteworthy that Dr. Perera, in keeping the book up-to-date with the various editions, has not destroyed the interesting, practical and attractive original format.

The printing, illustrations and paper are excellent.

The book, which has gone through 22 American editions, has been translated into nine languages and is still the most important reference on ophthalmology of the medical student and general practitioner.

FREDERICK C. CORDES, M.D.

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**ABSTRACTS OF SOVIET MEDICINE—Part A—Basic Medical Sciences, Vol. 1, 1957, No. 1. Part B—Clinical Medicine, Vol. 1, 1957, No. 1.** Excerpta Medica Foundation, New York Academy of Medicine Building, 2 East 103 Street, New York 29, N. Y. Part A, \$15.00; Part B, \$15.00; Combined subscription, Part A and B, \$25.00.

A grant of the National Institutes of Health, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to the Excerpta Medica Foundation has made possible the publication of Abstracts of Soviet Medicine in two parts: Basic Medical Sciences and Clinical Medicine, of which Volume I, No. 1 of each part have been published. Thus a large body of medical and scientific literature will be brought to the attention of those who read English but not Russian. The format is identical with that of the other divisions of Excerpta Medica. The material is drawn from the Medicinskij Referativnij Zhurnal (Soviet Medical Abstracting Journal) and from abstracts prepared under the supervision of a group chosen from the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, Moscow. The titles of all articles abstracted are translated into English and the abstracts are in English. The whole material is translated, edited, supervised and indexed by Excerpta Medica's editorial board in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The Foreword to the first number of each part states that "the primary object of this far-reaching project is to assist in the creation of the final essential link in the interchange of medical information on a truly global basis."

CLINTON H. THIENES, M.D.

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**THE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM—Its Interpretation and Clinical Application—Second Edition, Revised**—Louis H. Sigler, M.D., F.A.C.P., F.C.C.P., F.A.C.C., Attending Cardiologist and Chief of Cardia Clinics, Coney Island Hospital, etc., Grune & Stratton, New York, 1957. 312 pages, \$8.75.

This book is an elementary account of electrocardiography which discusses in a reasonably competent manner most of the patterns necessary for interpretation. This new second edition has very little up-to-date material, and most of the bibliographies at the end of each chapter have references prior to 1945. The chapter on ventricular hypertrophy is an exception.

There is an inadequate discussion on electrocardiographic changes due to imbalance. The section on congenital heart disease is extremely meager with no bibliography despite the fact that it is in this area that many advances have been made.

The section on premature contractions is quite good.

In general, the reviewer finds little evidence that new material is included in the second edition. In view of the excellent, up-to-date books on electrocardiography now available, the reviewer sees no outstanding distinguishing features of this book.